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**Globalization, Social Movements, and the Construction
of Europe: The Example of the European Parliament
Elections in France***

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Globalization, Social Movements, and the Construction of Europe: The Example of the European Parliament Elections in France

Though social scientists have lately devoted themselves to the study of globalization (Waters 1995; Hirst and Thompson 1999), most of these studies have concentrated on its economic and social consequences. Globalization is often seen as a fundamentally unjust process that causes confusion and destroys more than it creates. In many areas, the substantive implications of globalization are left untouched. In this paper, I examine the link between regional integration in Western Europe and the transformation of domestic politics through the example of the European Parliament elections. I argue that globalization through European integration is having a significant impact on French domestic politics. More precisely, the elections to the European Parliament, a supranational political institution, have contributed to the political mobilization of traditionally voiceless groups such as the unemployed and to the introduction into public discussion of new issues tied to Europe, transforming political culture and the relationship between national politics and multinational bargaining (Keohane and Hoffmann 1990, 295).

According to numerous studies, the European Parliament is a marginal institution in all the fifteen member states of the European Union, and the political values it represents are dominated values on the domestic scales determining political activity and judgment (Reif 1997, 115-124). Consequently, many political scientists consider the European Parliament elections are second order elections compared to presidential or other national elections (Reif

& Schmitt 1980, 3-44; Eick and Franklin 1996). However, from the point of view of domestic politics, these elections are by no means secondary. They have multiple effects on Europeanized domestic political systems (Christensen 1994). The European Parliament elections function as a social laboratory where parties, currents, and social movements can test new ideas, present new candidates, and challenge established political practices. Precisely because in France the European Parliament elections are considered less important than the elections to the lower chamber, the National Assembly, politicians see in them an opportunity to take risks and experiment with a lower price to pay for failure. Because the elections to the European Parliament serve as an occasion to innovate, they give us a glimpse of what French politics might be in the future, revealing social trends that would otherwise remain hidden. Furthermore, the elections to the European Parliament provide a public space where ideas relative to Europe can be developed.

Joining the European Community or Union is a significant event for a country because it raises the number of elected national officials. In France, for example, the rise in 1979 was on the order of 10 percent. Concretely this means that these new five-year posts become objects of struggle between political parties, currents inside these parties, and, because of the rules of competition, various protest movements exterior to party politics. One of the structural effects of European integration has been that each member state of the European Union has to send representatives to the European Parliament. An extra-territorial institution based in Brussels that holds meetings once a month in Strasbourg, France, thereby becomes an integral part of domestic politics in all European Union countries. At the same time, a new political type is born: the elected transnational politician, half-politician and half-”elected diplomat”, a hybrid of international politician, national elected official, and cultural emissary.

As a consequence of the transformation, the size and structure, of the Europeanized political systems, new political issues tied to European political representation have been introduced into national political debates, creating confusion and uncertainty. What should the MEP's (Member of the European Parliament) role in domestic politics be? Should national political leaders be present in the European Parliament, or should they restrict their activities to national parliaments? What criteria should parties use to select their candidates for European Parliament elections? Should the candidates be Europeans, experts, regional representatives, or solely the representatives of political parties?

The elections to the European Parliament present at least two general characteristics. First, in all European Union countries, the post of MEP is less valued than other elected national representatives or deputies. In France, MEPs do not have the educational characteristics that correlate with positions of political power. As the European Parliament is situated in a relatively unstable zone compared to national institutions such as the National Assembly, the percentage of MEPs resigning from their posts in mid-term is higher than for other national posts. For instance, between 1989 and 1994, 36 percent of French MEPs abandoned their mandates in mid-term (Kauppi 1996, 1-24). Of the 87 French MEPs elected in 1994, only 69 (80 percent) were still MEPs in 1999: 18 of them (20 percent) had been appointed ministers in Lionel Jospin's Socialist government in 1997 or had switched to local politics. Also, at each election to the European Parliament, the proportion of new MEPs is much higher than that of incumbents. In 1994, only 32 percent of MEPs renewed their positions. In comparison, in 1997 48 percent of deputies renewed their positions. French MEP Fabre-Aubespry echoed a general view among French politicians when he said he would have no hesitations about choosing the National Assembly over of the European Parliament (Beauvallet 1998, 30).

Second, the level of abstention is much higher in European Parliament elections than in national or local elections. In France, the abstention rate fluctuated between 39 percent and 53 percent. The sociological characteristics of the voters partly explain this lower turnout. Voters interested in European affairs are well educated and well off. According to a study conducted in Nantes, France, by Martine Chadron, Charles Suaud, and Yves Tertrais, 45 percent of Nantians are already familiar with Europe because of their work. 59 percent of these are senior managers (*cadres supérieurs*) (Chadron et al. 1991, 34-46). This overrepresentation of the middle- and upper-classes is also visible in the European Parliament, although not to the same extent as in the National Assembly (Birnbaum 1985).

In France, the deputies are more socially and politically an elite than are the MEPs. Traditionally they have more often held simultaneous positions in the political system than MEPs. For instance in 1988 96 percent of deputies held local offices. For MEPs the average was 71 percent in 1994. Differences in the modes of election partly explain this. In the parliamentary elections a two-round majority system guarantees that the main political parties get the most votes. In contrast, the proportional system used in the European elections favours the smaller parties and various ad hoc political constellations, including social movements.

As the European Parliament has gained power in the 1990s, the hostility of national deputies toward it has grown. Tensions have developed. For some deputies, MEPs are not real politicians because they do not have a constituency to nurture. They do not have to spend their Sundays at fairs and markets meeting their electors. Because of their extra-territorial status, MEPs suffer from collective split personality disorder, and a general sense of inferiority vis-à-vis national politicians. This sense of inferiority is coupled with a reputation in their home countries for being untouchable, unaccountable, and irresponsible. While

feeling detached from “real” politics, MEPs have a sense of being part of a great adventure and historical mission, constructing the architecture of the future, a Europe of the 21st century (Abélès 1992). This forward-looking outlook legitimizes, in their eyes, their present political illegitimacy and stigma in an institution, the European Parliament, in which the relative absence of traditional political partisan divisions enables intra-party cooperation and political discussion.

The rules of political competition

In contrast to other European Union countries that are divided into several regional districts for the elections to the European Parliament, France comprises one national electoral district. As a result, national representation is emphasized over regional or local representation. In a single voting district, the national media plays a decisive role and nationally known individuals have an advantage. Proportional representation structures political competition differently in the elections to the European Parliament than the two-round majority system used in elections to the National Assembly. Proportional representation means that seats are distributed according to the votes a list receives. Moreover, in France, there is no preferential voting system as in countries such as Finland and thus votes go to lists and not to individuals. The political parties, coalitions, or movements set the priorities and rank the candidates representing various interests. For instance, in the 1999 European elections the *Rassemblement pour la République-Démocratie libérale-Génération écologie* (RPR-DL-GE) -list “*L’Europe pour la France*” led by Nicolas Sarkozy and Alain Madelin included representatives of different wings of these three parties, from the followers of President Jacques Chirac to supporters of former Speaker of the National Assembly Philippe Séguin,

former Prime Minister Alain Juppé, and various public figures, regional representatives, women politicians, and so on.

In France proportional lists are used with a 5 percent threshold. If a list does not get 5 percent of the total votes, it gets no seats. In preventing the smallest coalitions from being represented this threshold hinders the excessive splitting of the political spectrum. However, the 5 percent threshold was not enough for Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. In 1998, Jospin tried to transform the proportional system into a de facto majority system by proposing a 10 percent threshold for the European elections, and division into several districts instead of a single one (*Le Monde* 1998, 44-45). Surprisingly, Gaullist President Chirac backed Socialist Prime Minister Jospin in these efforts. Both Jospin and Chirac wanted to eliminate the smaller parties with representation between 5 and 10 percent, like the French Communist Party and especially the extreme rightist *Front National* (FN) led by Jean-Marie Le Pen. They hoped that as a result of these measures the French party system would be divided into two hegemonic blocks led by Jospin and Chirac. The proposal met fierce resistance not only from the smaller parties but also from the leaders of various currents in the larger parties. Especially vocal about their opposition to any reforms were the small parties on the left, the Verts, the Communistes, and Jean-Pierre Chevènement's *Mouvement des citoyens* (MDC) (Graham 1998). Because of this resistance, Chirac and Jospin abandoned the reform, at least for the moment.

In their reform attempt, Chirac and Jospin were motivated partly by narrow partisan interest in strengthening their positions on the left and the right and partly by national concern over French influence in the European Union. By renovating the rules of competition in the European elections, Chirac and Jospin were trying to consolidate their camps, increase their control over the content of political debates, and prepare the ground for the political

battle that will culminate in the presidential elections of 2002. Jospin's proposal would have cut up the country up into eight super-regions or "regional baronies" that would have transformed the national campaigns into regional campaigns. The reform would have done away with the possibility of plurality of posts (*cumul des mandats*), that is, of holding two or more local or national elected offices simultaneously (Mény 1987, 230). An electoral law restricting plurality of posts was eventually passed. According to Article L46-1 of this law, "no one can accumulate more than two electoral mandates." Electoral mandates include those of French parliamentarian, European deputy, regional or general councillor, and mayor of a town of more than 20 000 inhabitants.

Chirac backed Jospin's reform because of the results of the 1998 regional elections, in which the Front National won numerous seats with the assistance of Gaullist politicians and five Gaullist presidents of regions were elected with the help of *Front National* voters. Jospin's proposal would have eliminated any hopes of small parties being represented. For instance, under the reform, the Center district of France (roughly the area of the *Massif Central*) were allotted six MEPs, to be represented in this geographical area a list would need to receive get at least 16.66 per cent of all the votes (100 divided by 6 seats). De facto this would mean that small parties such as the Verts, the *Parti communiste français* (PCF), the *Front National*, or protest movements such as *Lutte ouvrière* (LO) would be left without a political voice in the Center district.

Chirac and Jospin's second motive for transforming the rules of competition was France's influence in the European Union. Because there were so many French lists (in 1999 nine lists were represented), French MEPs are scattered across the European Parliament in a number of small political groups. As a result, their influence is quite modest (Pitette 1998). This influence is further weakened by the system of plurality of posts. Because as a rule

French MEPs hold other national and regional positions, they are often absent when important decisions are made in the European Parliament. An MEP described the effects of this French absenteeism and how political opponents used it to their advantage:

Friday was the ideal day for passing a resolution in Strasbourg which was unfavorable to France. Half, even three-fourths of the French representatives had already returned to their electoral districts, to make an appearance on market day or give out medals. (Druon 1998)¹

One of the effects of French absenteeism has been an increase in French MEPs' hostility toward the European Parliament. Because decisions are made to which French MEPs do not contribute and to which they are sometimes opposed, they feel they can criticize the institution they are supposed to represent. Thus, they contribute to the delegitimization of the Union and its institutions.

Another effect of Jospin's reform would have been tighter executive control over the French debate on Europe. By regionalizing campaigns, Jospin and Chirac would have regionalized the debate and reinforced their control over national priorities. Consequently, the grip the two have over the national political agenda would have tightened. The risk the reform presented for Jospin and Chirac was that by promoting a German-style France of the *länder* they might create regional baronies or regional super-representatives who would have real legitimacy in the eyes of their constituencies and might challenge national decision makers - currently the real electors of French MEPs.

¹ "Le vendredi est le jour idéal pour faire passer à Strasbourg une résolution qui nous était défavorable. La moitié, sinon les trois quarts, des représentants français étaient retournés dans leur fief électoral, pour se montrer sur les marchés ou remettre des médailles."

The revolt of the underdogs

For political groups that are in the minority or that represent non-party interests, such as the various protest movements, the European elections are a unique opportunity to present their message to a national audience and to shape the political agendas of the ruling parties. In the elections to the European Parliament in 1999, these protest movements included the *Chasse-Pêche-Nature-Tradition* (CNPT) list, representing traditional rural values; a movement of minorities and inhabitants of France's overseas territories; a movement of the unemployed; a list composed of candidates from Martinique; and a list demanding lower taxes. Only a few such groups could realistically hope to win any seats. In the party political system, the elections offer unknown or novice politicians a way to become national figures. Dominique Baudis, television journalist and son of Pierre Baudis, mayor of Toulouse, became a national political figure after being chosen chief candidate of the RPR-*Union pour la démocratie française* (UDF) list in 1994. He did not stay long in the European Parliament, however. In 1997, Baudis was elected to the National Assembly and resigned from his post at the European Parliament.

Some regional politicians have seen in the European Parliament a forum for promoting regional cultural and economic autonomy vis-à-vis national authorities (Zeller 1999). In France, women politicians have been over-represented in the European Parliament compared to the National Assembly (for details, cf. Kauppi 1999, 329-340). For women politicians excluded from the male-dominated Parisian political cliques, the European Parliament has presented an avenue of political promotion and an alternative to the National

Assembly as a gate of access to national electoral politics. In the 1999 campaign, for the first time in French political history, viable candidates of African descent appeared on television debates, seeking to mobilize the usually abstentionist minority and partly non-Christian electorates.

The European Parliament elections also present an opportunity for small parties or ad hoc lists and movements to apply for public financing for their electoral campaigns. Until 1995, no laws existed in France concerning the public financing of political parties. To clarify the situation and to attempt to control the private financing of parties, the National Assembly passed a law. According to this law, if a party or list does not get over 5 percent of the votes, its campaign expenses will not be reimbursed from public funds. However, if the party or list gets over 5 percent of the votes, the following costs will be covered: the guarantee of 100,000 French francs the party or list deposited; the official campaign expenses, which can include posters, ballot papers, etc., and which can reach as much as FF 20 million; and 50 percent of the legal limit (*plafond légal*), which means the personal funds brought to the campaign by the candidates themselves. In 1999, the legal limit was FF 58.8 million; thus, up to FF 29.4 million could be reimbursed.

As French party structures are weak compared to other European party structures and European elections are relatively low risk elections, they are an ideal occasion for interparty currents to compete and measure their political legitimacy. Often, list leaders are major contenders who try to gather followers and shape a team for presidential elections. In the hierarchy of elections, the presidential elections are at the top in Fifth Republic France, a semi-presidential system where the president is the most powerful political actor (Duverger 1974). European elections are intermediate elections between big elections like parliamentary or presidential elections.

The example of Socialist politician Michel Rocard illuminates the social laboratory character of the elections to the European Parliament. A major contender for the presidency at the beginning of the 1990s, he led the Socialist list in the European elections in 1994. These elections offered Rocard an opportunity to test his national popularity. They were a fiasco and, as a result, Rocard lost his credibility as a serious presidential contender (*présidentiable*). Gaullist politician Nicolas Sarkozy met the same fate, first in 1992 and again in 1999. As a result of these failures, at the end of the 1990s the only serious Socialist presidential candidate is Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and the only serious Gaullist candidate President Jacques Chirac. They are engaged in a race for the presidency. In this race, European symbolic legitimacy is as necessary as domestic support. Both Chirac and Jospin are eager to present themselves as statesmen of European and not only national caliber. As a consequence of this transformation of the context of political action from national to European level, language skills and contacts with European and world leaders have become political resources. In the French press, Chirac has been praised for his mastery of the English language. In May 1999, during a trip to Italy to visit Prime Minister Amato, Jospin gave his speech in Italian.

For politicians seeking a popular mandate, the political meaning of the elections to the European parliament is different in Fifth Republic France than in most other European Union countries. In Finland, for instance, a politician cannot concurrently be a MEP and a mayor, deputy, or regional councillor. In France, holding a plurality of political posts is the norm. For a politician concerned about job security this is an ideal arrangement. And who wouldn't be concerned about it, as most political posts are elected posts and subject to changes in voter preference? For a politician, the downside of European representation in Brussels is that it relieves him/her of the many duties a deputy or a local politician has to carry out in Paris or in

the locality he/she represents. Local political anchoring guarantees the political survival of an MEP, as MEP Pierre Bernard-Raymond reminds us.

If I had not presented myself or if I had been beaten at the second municipal elections for the mayorship of Gap [small town in the south of France, NK], I would have had trouble convincing François Bayrou [leader of the UDF-party, NK] to put me on his list. (Beauvallet 1998, 65-66)²

Local political anchoring is also required for access to high political positions in Paris. In French political culture a local position is more valuable than a European one. This is why all rising political stars seek local mandates. Even French Commissioner (1994-1999) Yves-Thibault de Silguy presented himself as a candidate for mayoral elections in the north of France. European Commission President Jacques Santer had to intervene and prevent de Silguy from running, as local representation was in clear contradiction with European representation. Losing a local mandate can also have disastrous effects on careers. For instance, in 1995 shortly after being nominated to Alain Juppé's government, Elisabeth Hubert lost the municipal elections. She wasn't invited to join Juppé's second government.

² “Si je ne m'étais pas représenté ou si j'avais été battu à la mairie de Gap aux deuxièmes élections municipales, j'aurai du mal pour convaincre François Bayrou de me mettre sur la liste.”

Apart from the importance of local offices another distinguishing feature of French politics is the unusually high number of civil servants running for public office. In most European Union countries a civil servant has to resign in order to run for parliament, and there is no coming back to his/her former job in the civil service. In France, a civil servant can always apply for a temporary leave of absence (*détachement*) and return, after holding a political post, to his/her former position in the civil service. As a civil servant, a would-be politician can run a political campaign from his/her office and be paid for it. After losing the European elections in 1999, Bruno Mégret and his comrades-in-arms from the alternative extreme right party *Mouvement national* (MN) returned to their ministries to continue their civil service careers. It is no accident that the Fifth Republic has been called the civil servants' republic.

From the point of view of a French career politician who does not have a civil service job on which to fall back, the risk involved in running for the European Parliament is less than in political cultures where plurality of elected posts is illegal. At the same time, however, plurality of posts is a serious obstacle to professionalization of the role of Europarliamentarian. As the psychological and professional threshold for running for the European Parliament is, relatively speaking, lower than for the National Assembly, the level of investment in and seriousness of the campaign will also be lower. In general, a French politician's career will not depend as much on the level of professionalism s/he develops in one elected post as on the existence of a comprehensive social safety net composed of multiple posts, a network the power of which depends on the politician's relations with the top politicians in intraparty currents. This network also undermines the power of political party structures. It is understandable, then, that MEP Jean-Louis Bourlanges would equate electoral sanction and mentor sanction:

The electorate does not exist for a European parliamentarian. Ten people - Mr. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Mr. Bayrou, Mr. Madelin, and the rest - that's who the electorate is. (Beauvallet 1998, 52)³

³ “L'électorat, ça n'existe pas pour un parlementaire européen. C'est Monsieur Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Monsieur Bayrou, Monsieur Madelin, voilà où est l'électorat, c'est dix personnes.”

For French politicians, relations with party leaders are fundamental for election.⁴ The case of Michèle Barzat exemplifies the role of currents inside political parties. Elected to the European Parliament on the Socialist list in 1979, she took her work very seriously and specialized in energy questions. In 1989, however, she was placed 25th on the Socialist list led by Laurent Fabius. Without the backing of a major political figure, she was not re-elected. Continuity requires entertaining good relations with party bosses. Because of the dominance of this executive democracy, in which electors merely confirm a selection made by party leaders, MEPs are not necessarily tied to specific interests but rather drift and improvise, as their role is not yet codified. As MEP Bourlanges put it:

Well, you're everybody's representative and you're nobody's. You make appearances everywhere, you never know when you should accept an invitation or refuse, etc. It really doesn't matter if I'm actually in my district or

⁴ Gender parity might change the political game somewhat, as it will be required that political leaders list as many women candidates as men candidates.

not. (Beauvallet 1998, 52)⁵

If the European Parliament is a place where members of politically marginal groups can acquire political experience, for some politicians it is merely a stepping stone. For ambitious young politicians who have all the necessary credentials to make it to the top (*Institut d'études politiques, École nationale d'administration, ministerial cabinet*) (Bourdieu 1996), experience in the European Parliament has in the 1990s become a positive addition to a political curriculum vitae. Often more experienced politicians close to retirement age will also see the European Parliament as a temporary post. According to a senior Finnish politician, the European Parliament is for many European politicians an “elephant cemetery.” In the French case Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who long harbored hopes of becoming Europe's first President, is an excellent example. For Giscard d'Estaing, representation in the European Parliament was more symbolic than political in the traditional sense of the term. More generally, MEPs can be divided into “experts,” “novices,” “elephants,” and “tourists” depending on their political experience and level of involvement in European affairs. Experts like Jean-Louis Bourlanges share with “elephants” a high level of political experience, whereas “novices” such as H  l  ne Carr  re-d'Encausse and unknown “tourists” are beginners

⁵ “Bah, vous   tes l'  lu de tout le monde, vous n'  tes l'  lu de personne. Vous vous promenez un peu partout, vous ne savez pas tr  s bien s'il faut refuser une invitation ou pas etc. Bah,   a ne sert    rien d'  tre pr  sent ou absent dans mon district.”

in political matters.

Table 1. Typology of European Parliamentarians

		Political experience	
		High	Low
Investment	High	A. Expert	B. Novice
	Low	C. Elephant	D. Tourist

The significance of a seat in the European Parliament depends to some extent on the size of the country represented and on how long the country has been a member state of the European Union. The dilemma of representation - party or country - takes a different form in Finland, a small, new EU country, than in France, a relatively large, long-standing EU country. The first European elections in Finland in 1996 consisted of two separate elections: one of political representatives and one of popular diplomats (Martikainen and Pekonen 1999). Political representatives were close to party leaders, relying on traditional collective political resources. Popularly elected diplomats were media stars, often non-political, and with a strong cultural and/or educational background. In contrast to political representatives, they were more often women than men, relying on resources that escaped party control. In the popular mind, reinforced by political parties seeking to recruit celebrities, it was enough to be photogenic and cultured to be a competent Europarliamentarian. Although ski champions and television hosts may not as such be competent for the job of MEP, the collective creation of such elected cultural “diplomats” testifies to an effort on the part of the electors and the

media to define what European competence can be. In France, the influence of cultural criteria takes a different form than in some other European Union countries like Finland. Traditional party politics in selecting MEPs rule, but pro-Europeanism seems to follow cultural rather than traditional political criteria.

The 1999 election programs and campaigns

Since the referendum of 1992 on the Maastricht treaty, the “*enjeu européen*” has split the electorate and become a major political issue in French politics. According to a sociological study of the referendum of 1992, of the managers and persons holding a university diploma who voted, 70 percent of the former and 71 percent of the latter voted “yes” to France signing the Maastricht treaty, while 60 percent of those who voted “no” had a diploma lower than the baccalaureate and 58 percent of them were manual workers (Bidégaray and Emeri 1996, 71). According to political scientist Pascal Perrineau, inhabitants of towns voted yes, those of rural areas no (Perrineau 1996, 45-60). This data seems to indicate that the more educated an individual is, the more likely s/he is going to be pro-European. To a large extent, cultural and social criteria determine political opinion.

Europeanization as a complex process of readjustment of whole political systems structures not only the French institutional space through new institutions such as the European Parliament, but also the space of political discourses. This was particularly visible during the European Parliament election campaign of 1999. A clear Europeanization of political discourses split the left and the right into federalists and sovereignists, although no politician would publicly supported abolition of the nation-state. This split was partly produced and reinforced by the media. For the candidates, media visibility determined

success. As the war raged in Kosovo, politicians made trips there to show their support, a gesture that did not go unnoticed by millions of electors glued to their TV sets during the evening news. Nicolas Sarkozy, chief candidate of the RPR-DL list, declared to the press that he was going to invent something new every week, “in order to stay a fresh product” (*Libération* 1999).⁶ The press printed photos of him with strongmen Valéry Giscard d’Estaing in Auvergne and Alain Juppé in Aquitaine. Sarkozy’s political tour de France was ironically labelled “the magical Sarkozy tour” on “*La semaine des guignols*” (May 23rd), a satirical weekly television show on Canal Plus.

To show his backing of François Hollande’s Socialist list, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin spent his time travelling to meet other Socialist leaders in Rome and Madrid and hosted a political meeting at the Palais des Sports in Paris with Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder. Media coverage of the political events and demonstrations ranged from daily radio shows like Jean-Pierre Elkabbach’s daily interviews of politicians on “Europe 1” at 8:21 am to a special political talk show on Sundays at 6:30, conveniently scheduled just before the aperitif, broadcast on LCI’s cable television station and on radio station RTL. Appearing on these was a must for any politician. On Channel 1 (TF1), the program “Public” featured a special Sarkozy-Hollande debate. Paul Amar’s show “Direct,” on Thursday evenings on France 2, and Christine Ockrent’s “*Politique Dimanche*,” on Sundays, and “*France Europe Express*,” on Thursdays, all on France 3, competed in the notoriety of the politicians they succeeded in inviting. The media week was crowned on Sundays by the satirical programs

⁶ “Pour rester un produit frais.”

“*Le vrai journal*” and “*Les guignols*” on Canal Plus. During the summer of 1999 Canal Plus also presented a special program on which every top candidate appeared before the public.

In order to properly evaluate the political status of the European Parliament elections, we must relate them to the long-term strategies of individual political agents and collective enterprises. The 1999 campaign was structured by the media presence of the candidates (87 on each list), the events in Kosovo and on the domestic scene, and the programs on television and radio. The elections had many social uses. They presented politicians with an opportunity first to test their strength and then to challenge their enemies inside and outside the party, either by forcing them to elaborate on their stances on certain issues or by simply discrediting them. For the chief candidates, the question they wanted an answer to was, were they legitimate presidential contenders (*présidentiable*)?

Because the European Parliament elections are national elections but are less important than the presidentials, they provide an ideal opportunity to consult the whole population and test the relative support of challengers and minority currents. Precisely for this reason, the leaders of the political parties are not chief candidates in the European Parliament elections. In order to be eligible for the presidency, the grand prize in the French political game, a candidate has to have a sizeable base of support and be considered a candidate of the highest caliber, which today more than before means of European caliber.

In 1999 the elections were, as usual, of minor importance but with high stakes, a test for all chief candidates. The political challenge for them was to get as many votes as their lists had gotten in the previous elections in 1994, which set the standards of success and failure. Could Daniel Cohn-Bendit, former student leader of May 1968, deputy mayor of Frankfurt am Main, and now chief candidate on the Green list be a player of national importance in French politics? To prove that he could be, he had to get at least 10 percent of

the votes. Could chief Socialist candidate François Hollande build his political career without the explicit backing of Prime Minister Jospin? To prove that he could, he had to attract more than 14.49 percent of the voters, Rocard's result in the 1994 elections. Would François Bayrou, president of the centrist UDF and chief candidate of the list "*Avec l'Europe, prenons une France d'avance*" and Alain Madelin, second on the list "*L'Union pour l'Europe*" led by Nicolas Sarkozy, be able to muster enough support for their ideas to present a viable alternative to the dominant party on the right, the RPR led by President Chirac? As a consequence, might the next French President be from the right but not from the Gaullist party? To demonstrate that this was a real possibility in the Spring of 1999, when such a proposition was considered unlikely, both Bayrou and Madelin would have needed at least 10 percent of the votes each. To achieve this goal, they were faced with a choice: join the RPR or go solo and get the necessary votes by themselves.

On the left, Robert Hue might lose his job as Secretary General of the PCF if he didn't succeed in getting as many votes for his list as in the previous elections, 6.91 percent. Could he do this with a separate list or should the Communists join the Socialists? The neo-nationalist and anti-European MDC, led by Jospin's Minister of the Interior Jean-Pierre Chevènement, which got only 2.3 percent of the votes in 1994, might try to better its score by forming a coalition with the Socialist party, with which Chevènement had already started to negotiate in the winter of 1998. Another left-wing movement, the *Parti républicain de gauche* (PRG), which succeeded in winning 13 seats in 1994 with Bernard Tapie and a different name, *Énergie radicale* (ER), had no alternative but to join forces with the Socialists. The proportional system in fact guaranteed to these smaller parties a certain advantage over the bigger parties.

Due to the war in Kosovo and France's role in this war, the architecture of a future

Europe, immigration policies, a common European defence, and other European issues became major political questions that split the political spectrum and turned the torpid political campaign into a heated, moral one. The following table presents the chief candidates and their stands on the question of European integration. The two dimensions are left-right and sovereigntist-federalist.

TABLE 2. Europeanism in the campaigns to the European Parliament

	Left	Right
	Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Greens, Federalist François Hollande, Socialists (Robert Hue, Communists)	François Bayrou, UDF Alain Madelin, DL (Nicolas Sarkozy, RPR)
Sovereigntist	(Alain Krivine, LCR), (Arlette Laguiller, LO) Jean-Pierre Chevènement, MDC	Charles Pasqua, Philippe de Villiers, RPF Jean-Marie Le Pen, FN, Bruno Mégret, MN, Jean Saint-Josse, CNPT

The leftist federalists were Daniel Cohn-Bendit, First Secretary of the Socialist Party François Hollande, and the less openly federalist Communist leader Robert Hue. Dominique Voynet, Minister of Environment in Jospin's government and leader of the Greens, was more critical toward Europe than Hue. General Secretary of the Communist party since Georges Marchais's resignation in 1994 and chief candidate of the list "*Bouge l'Europe!*," Hue combined anti- and pro-European elements in his campaign. Rightist federalists included François Bayrou, chief candidate of the "*Union de la France*" list. Slightly less openly federalist was Alain Madelin, leader of DL and number two on the RPR-DL list, led by Nicolas Sarkozy, interim president of the Gaullist party. In April 1999, Sarkozy, more ambivalent than Bayrou or Madelin toward Europe, replaced Philippe Séguin, Speaker of the

National Assembly, who had resigned from the presidency of the Gaullist party as a protest against Jacques Chirac's policies.

In view of Chirac's presidential ambitions, Bernard Pons, president of the association "*Les amis de Jacques Chirac*," tried to create the broadest possible coalition against the left in the European elections of 1999 in view of the presidential elections of 2002. Chirac's support of Jospin's electoral reform followed this logic. Chirac and Pons wanted to collaborate with rightist politicians Pasqua and de Villiers, who formed a common list *Rassemblement pour la France et l'indépendance de l'Europe* (RPF) after Philippe Séguin resigned from the head of the RPR-DL-GE list. Philippe Séguin, at this time Speaker of the National Assembly and president of the Gaullist party, represented the conservative wing of the RPR. He had serious problems with American military dominance in Europe, and could not accept France's minor role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁷ Séguin, a notorious anti-European, thought it was possible to conduct the European political campaign in 1999 on a purely national program. Like Pasqua, Séguin wanted to save Gaullism from Chiracism, that is from its subordination to Chirac's presidential ambitions. Séguin was ready to lead a national list without giving more power to the regions and without collaborating with the FN and the centrist UDF. In contrast, Chirac's political strategy for re-election in 2002 was to give more power to the regions, ruling by dividing and forming a broad alliance on the right that could challenge the leftist presidential candidate, which in 1999 looked like it would be Lionel Jospin.

Among the self-proclaimed sovereignists, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, head of the MDC, represented traditional leftist Republicanism and nationalism, building his campaign on an anti-European integration platform despite being Minister of Interior in Jospin's

⁷ France had rejoined NATO in 1996 through president Chirac's initiative.

government. On the far left, Arlette Laguiller, the only female chief candidate, presidential candidate in 1995 and leader of LO, and Alain Krivine, leader of the *Lutte communiste révolutionnaire* (LCR), inherited an anti-establishment posture from the Communist party, which had moved toward the center of the political spectrum. On the right among the sovereignists Charles Pasqua, former Minister of Interior and co-founder with Jacques Chirac of the RPR, and Philippe de Villiers, founder of the *Mouvement pour la France* party and deputy of Vendée, headed the RPF list. On the far right, both Jean-Marie le Pen and Bruno Mégret conducted anti-imperialist, anti-American, and anti-European campaigns.

Extremist parties such as the FN, LO, and LCR resisted European integration in its current form, whereas bigger parties closer to the center of the political spectrum were pro-European. Generally speaking, this same cleavage, big parties for and small against, was reproduced in other European Union countries as well, cutting across traditional divisions such as left-right and restructuring the space of political ideologies. As a result, parties and movements on the extremes of the political spectrum could find common strategic interests not only symbolically but also pragmatically at local, national, or supranational levels. For instance, Charles Pasqua left the RPR after it was clear that the master of the house was Jacques Chirac. For the European elections of 1999, he created his own list on a sovereignist platform. He saw that Jean-Pierre Chevènement's leftist, anti-European MDC had common interests with his. Apart from Chevènement's anti-Europeanism, one position they shared was overt opposition to France's role in the war in Kosovo and to the bombings there. Despite these common interests, however, Pasqua did not succeed in creating a left-right coalition. Chevènement, who was at this time Minister of the Interior in Jospin's government, probably saw more to gain from a coalition with the Socialists in government and the smaller PRG.

Why are the large French parties pro-European? First, large political organizations

aim at forming governments by themselves or in cooperation with other parties. Second, dominant economic and political interests in all EU-countries are pro-European. Once in government, party representatives have to collaborate in the context of European Union institutions not only with their homologues from other European Union countries in the Council of Ministers and other Union institutions, but also with the administration in Brussels. From a purely pragmatic point of view, exposing anti-European views is impossible in these Europeanized political circumstances. However, it is not impossible to be anti-European and hold a ministerial position. But Jean-Pierre Chevènement's activities as Minister of the Interior in Jospin's government and as leader of the anti-European MDC illustrate that the constant contradictions between anti-Europeanism and work in a government that is *by definition* pro-European may in the long run diminish political legitimacy and permanently damage the political future of the movement. As a rule of thumb, at the end of the 1990s in the European polity the higher a political leader is in national political hierarchies, the less likely s/he will be anti-European, at least while in government. This European cleavage creates for all lists and parties tensions that take various forms and that agents resolve with varying degree of success.

European of the left and social movements

Splitting the political spectrum, the Kosovo war also had effects on how the campaigns were run. It led to confusion as already planned campaigns had to be reorganized. Henceforth, political meetings could not be too enthusiastic. The Socialists' video clip on the theme "*L'Europe, c'est la paix*" had to be cancelled. The Kosovo war also opened the door for

intellectual activism that would press the government to face certain issues. The threat of an independent list on the “left of the left” (*gauche de la gauche*) led by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu was real, forcing, among other things, the Communists, the Socialists, and the Greens to seek cooperation with social movements.

Because of the power of the new European political cleavage for or against Europe organisations like Chevènement’s MDC or Robert Hue’s list “*Bouge l’Europe!*” were caught between contradictory ideological and pragmatic political requirements. Ideologically, the French Communist Party was against market forces and the creation of a common European defense. Pragmatically, as a partner in Jospin’s government, it had to back French war efforts in the Balkans and could not openly question Jospin’s efforts to forge a common European security structure and to cut public spending and privatize industry. Hue even declared in the business daily *La Tribune* that “the Communists are not the adversaries of the market” and that “the Communists have broken with the statist view of things. We are thinking more of a system that will enable us to overcome the division between private and public yet mobilize both, under the auspices of a new kind of social appropriation which does not exclude the private sector” (*Le Monde* 1999, 7).⁸ Consequently, the Communist Party’s strategy for the European elections consisted of being pro-market and pro-European for pragmatic reasons but also critical of the market and of Europe for ideological and historical reasons. These contradictions could not be resolved. For instance, some Communists demanded that Hue resign from the government as a protest against the war. According to Hue, resigning would have only split the left in two, reinforcing the positions of both Jospin on the left and Chirac

⁸ “Les communistes ne sont pas les adversaires du marché” ... “Les communistes ont rompu avec une vision étatiste des choses. Nous réfléchissons à un système qui permettrait de dépasser la coupure entre le privé et le public en favorisant leur mobilisation commune, sous la responsabilité d’une nouvelle appropriation sociale, dont je n’écarterais évidemment le privé”.

on the right just before the European elections. Besides, as he put it, “Why resign when you can be more effective in the government?”(Virot 1999).⁹

Since Hue’s appointment to head the Communist Party in 1994, he has little by little renovated the party’s structure and program. At the beginning of 1999, the party’s main newspaper *L’Humanité* eliminated the hammer and the sickle from its front page. And this wasn’t just symbolic politics. *L’Humanité* declared that it had found a new way of doing politics. Its director Pierre Zarka stated bluntly that “L’Huma-new look” had ceased to be the Communist Party’s campaign tool and that it would no longer function as a mouthpiece for the Communist Party. *L’Humanité* and the party had adopted a new conception of the electorate and the elected, tied more to civil society. The party leadership decided to invest big in its European campaign, an opportunity to sound out public opinion and test the credibility of its new political line. The Party’s campaign was the costliest of all the campaigns, FF 40 million compared to FF 37 million for the Socialist campaign. It consisted of 1400 public appearances by politicians in different parts of France. Communist leaders had decided to offer bread and circus to attract traditionally passive voters.

⁹ “Pourquoi démissionner quand on est plus efficace dans le gouvernement.”

Tonight, at the Cirque d'hiver. The ten artists of the list "*Bouge l'Europe!*" invite everyone (free admission) to the Cirque d'hiver in Paris tonight. You want the program? De Graph' performance by Marko; urban cultures; Fu(rap) section; Solo jah Gunt (reggae dub faya) ... Then, for you jazz-lovers, Jean-Claude Petit; Mélodica; Jazzcogne. Piano solos by André Minvielle and Bernard Lubat. And it goes on: Djamel Allam, Farik Berki (hip-hop blues). Finally, the crucial moment: "the citizens' dance-show" ... And along with all this, Roger Hanin, Richard Bohringer, "surprise" comrades and the whole "*Bouge l'Europe!*" team. The show starts at 7pm. (*L'Humanité* June 1, 1999, 6)¹⁰

¹⁰ "Ce soir au Cirque d'hiver. Les dix artistes de la liste Bouge l'Europe! Invitent tout un chacun (entrée gratuite) ce soir au Cirque d'hiver à Paris. Vous voulez le programme? De Graph'performance de Marko; Cultures urbaines; Section Fu(rap); Solo jah Gunt (reggae dub faya ... Moment zazou ensuite, avec Jean-Claude Petit; Mélodica; Jazzcogne. Moment piano solo: André Minvielle, Bernard Lubat. Et ça continue: Djamel Allam, Farik Berki (hip-hop

The Communist campaign for the European elections was, from the beginning, intended to give a fresh, new image of the party. The campaign would appeal to various ethnic groups and would be open to “social movements” including the diverse activist labor organizations and groups such as the “*sans papiers*” (persons without immigration papers) and the unemployed which had been organizing marches and demonstrations in France’s largest cities since 1995. The Communist party no longer wanted to be a militant party. Like the Greens, led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the Communist party tried to attract the young and usually abstentionist electorate by minimizing traditional politics. In both cases, the campaign for the European Parliament was reduced to pop music, cultural celebrities, and buffets. In compiling his list of candidates for the European Parliament, Robert Hue also developed the novel idea of “double parity”. This meant not only the already popularly accepted parity between men and women, but also parity on the list between Communist and non-Communist, professional and non-professional candidates. To muster support for the Communist list, Hue was forging an alternative to the radical anti-capitalism of Arlette Laguiller and Alain Krivine while

blues). Et enfin, moment crucial: “show-bal citoyen” ... Et avec tout cela Roger Hanin, Richard Bohringer, les camarades “surprises” et l’équipe de Bouge l’Europe! Ça commence à 19 heures.”

responding to the challenge from the Green list using the same methods the Greens were using.

The press published the names of a thousand supporters of Hue's list. These included the wife of former Communist party Secretary General Georges Marchais, Pierre Bergé, CEO of the fashion firm Yves Saint Laurent, the Kabyle singer Idir, and the novelist Gilles Perrault. The first public meeting of Hue's list "*Bouge l'Europe!*" was held in Saint-Ouen, a working-class suburb of Paris. In organizing the meeting, the party contacted intellectuals and activists in various social movements. Theatre director and "*sans papiers*" activist Stanislas Nordley received a phone call and was asked to join the party's list. In spite of the fact that he was in his own words "sensitive" to the issue of harnessing of the social movement to the Communist party, Nordley accepted. Recalling his motives for joining the Communist list, he came to the conclusion that "a protest vote on the left or the right is not enough" (Nordley 1999).¹¹ Institutions would have to be changed from the inside, and this would take a long time. Fodé Scylla, former president of the anti-racist organization *SOS-Racisme*, legitimized his own decision to accept the party's invitation by citing his desire to bridge the gap that separated social reality from the political parties. According to Sylla, the Communist party gave its candidates total liberty. Personally, he wanted to defend all those "without" ("*les sans*") - those without identification papers, those without a home, those without jobs - as well as women, who were victims like the unemployed. "For me, the European elections are an opportunity to extend my anti-racist struggle" (Sylla 1999a).¹² He was against an "Anglo-Saxon Europe," and wanted to talk about concrete issues close to the concerns of ordinary

¹¹ "Un vote protestataire à droite ou à gauche n'est pas suffisant."

¹² "Pour moi, les élections européennes sont une occasion de prolongement de mon combat anti-raciste."

people. “People I meet want to know how they can get dental care” (Scylla 1999b).¹³

According to André Campana, who represented the firm that created it, the video clip for the Communist party’s meeting intended to be an “interface with society” (*L’Humanité* 1999).¹⁴ The Communist list provided social movements with a platform where militants and human rights activists could meet one another and forge common goals. Like the Green list the Communist list also included candidates of color and Muslim candidates in an attempt to mobilize at least some of the three million French Muslim voters. For Hue, “this list does not make us less Communist, it makes us Communists of the 21st century. If we don’t change with society, society will change without us” (Thénard and Viot 1999b, 14).¹⁵ For Communist hardliners, however, Hue’s activities exemplified sheer opportunism, “a deviation

¹³ “Les gens que je rencontre veulent savoir comment se faire soigner les dents.”

¹⁴ “Système d’interface avec la société.”

¹⁵ “Cette liste ne nous rend pas moins communistes, mais communistes du XXIe siècle. Si nous ne bougeons pas avec la société, la société bougera sans nous.”

that will lead to elimination” (Anonymous 1999).¹⁶

In their program for the elections, the Communists wanted to reinforce the European Parliament and weaken the Commission, especially in the areas of competition and commercial policies. The Party supported the institution of the Tobin tax on the movements of speculative capital and the elimination of tax paradises sheltering money laundering and other illegal financial activities. The Communists called for the creation of a social Europe, conversion of all temporary jobs into permanent ones, guarantees of a minimum wage, opposition to the relocation of businesses, and shorter working hours without cutting salaries. The role of the European Economic and Social Committee was to be strengthened. “*Bouge l’Europe!*” also vowed to develop a common European defense, not in the framework of NATO but rather in the one provided by the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

¹⁶ “Une dérive qui conduit à une liquidation.”

On the extreme left, regional councillor Arlette Laguiller and Alain Krivine represented the unemployed and the workers, laboring for “rebirth of a force that will renew the revolutionary tradition of the workers’ movement” (Bazin 1999, 35).¹⁷ They openly criticized the leftist government for not being on the left and for being lackeys of the bourgeoisie. Commended by some of their supporters for using “right, simple, natural, and plain words” (Forcari 1999, 18),¹⁸ both candidates of the “red left” (*la gauche rouge*) demanded the convocation of a representative congress of the European peoples to constitute a New Europe. Like the Communists, they wanted to see more taxation of high income and speculative profits. Pacifists, they called for a Europe without wars, ethnic cleansing, or intervention by the superpowers. Contrary to Cohn-Bendit’s Greens, LO and LCR were against NATO’s bombings in the former Yugoslavia. The privatization of public enterprises had to be stopped and new jobs created in hospitals, public transportation, and public education. “Companies that make profits of billions of francs and then go and fire their workers ... must be requisitioned” (Fabre 1999, 7).¹⁹ The work week should be reduced from 35 to 30 weeks without cutting salaries. In Laguiller’s own words, if elected, she would defend in the European Parliament the interests of Europe’s 18 million unemployed and 50 million poor people (Laguiller 1999). In a campaign that almost exclusively concentrated on unemployment and social exclusion, Laguiller and Krivine claimed to be not anti-European, but rather against a Europe of the market. As in their previous campaigns, Laguiller and Krivine assumed the symbolic role that the Communist party had abandoned: that of the

¹⁷ “La renaissance d’une force renouant avec la tradition révolutionnaire du mouvement ouvrier.”

¹⁸ “Des mots justes et simples, naturels, sans baratins.”

¹⁹ “Les entreprises qui font des milliards de bénéfices et qui licencient malgré tout ... doivent être réquisitionnés.”

denunciators of those in power. At their public meetings, the International was sung with raised fists, recalling the good old days of the revolutionary movement. A retired manual worker spoke up at one of these meetings about his motives for voting for Laguiller and Krivine, echoing wider sentiments:

Listening to you takes me back to my twenties. With you at least we get down to the essentials. Yes, the bosses are still there. Yes, we have to get rid of capitalism. Yes, the exploitation is getting worse. Thank you for bringing up these obvious facts that seem to escape Robert Hue. (Bazin 1999, 35)²⁰

Daniel Cohn-Bendit was the most federalist of the chief candidates on the left. His ambition was for the Greens to become the strongest party on the left, after the Socialists and before the Communists. In their program, the Greens promoted qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers and the elaboration of a European constitution. The European Union also needed a constitutional court, a Senate where the regions and various peoples of the

²⁰ “Quand je vous écoute, je retrouve les accents de mes 20 ans. Avec vous, au moins, on ne tourne pas autour du pot. Oui, il y a encore des patrons. Oui, il faut abattre le capitalisme. Oui, l’exploitation est de plus en plus rude. Merci d’avoir rappelé ces évidences qui échappent pourtant à Robert Hue.”

Union would be represented, and a stronger European Parliament that would foster links with European civil society. The Greens called for harmonization of taxes in Europe and elimination of tax paradises. Taxation should be more just and ecological. The French ecological party also wanted to sponsor a European pollution tax and initiatives of the eco-development type. Like the Communists and LO-LCR, the Greens were in favor of introduction of the Tobin tax on capital movements between the European Union and the rest of the world, a levy which would finance an international public fund for codevelopment. The Greens were convinced that unemployment rates could be drastically cut by shortening working hours without diminishing salaries. Ecologically useful activities had to be furthered and a minimum European income equal to the poverty limit had to be instituted. In the long term, a pan-European defense system would replace NATO and the WEU.

Close to Cohn-Bendit in level of pro-European sentiment was François Hollande, first secretary of the Socialist party which represented the governmental majority and whose slogan was “*Construisons notre Europe*”. According to Hollande the Socialists, who had created a common list with Chevènement’s MDC and the PRG for the European elections, wanted a modern Europe that would take into account social, employment, and defense issues.

Our objective is to promote political Europe through the extension of qualified majority voting, to further creation of a European defense system, and to jump start the Europe of citizens and jobs. (Hollande 1999, 13)²¹

²¹ “Notre objectif est en fait de faire progresser l’Europe politique avec l’extension du vote à la majorité qualifiée, de faire avancer l’Europe de la défense et de donner un coup d’accélérateur à l’Europe de l’emploi ainsi qu’à l’Europe sociale.”

Because of the anti-Europeanism of Chevènement's MDC, the Socialists replaced the initial formulation "federation of nation-states" in their program with the more neutral "a union of nations and peoples freely agreed upon in mutual respect and the interest of all concerned" (*Le Monde* 1999, 9).²² The Socialists wanted a European Constitution and the extension of majority voting in the Council of Ministers, increased collegial responsibility of the European Commission, and a wider scope for the Parliament's codecision-making. In conjunction with enlargement of the Union to the east, the Socialist party called for a renovation of European Union institutions. The party emphasized that the human rights records of the new member-states should be closely monitored. Like the Greens, the Socialists supported the idea of harmonization of European taxes as well as imposition of a Tobin tax on capital movement and abolition of fiscal paradises. The Socialist party also wanted to see the value added tax (VAT) on manual labour-intensive economic activities cut. In terms of social Europe, the Socialists pushed for a social treaty of the same breadth and scope as the economic and monetary treaties in order to fight social exclusion. In their vision, by 2005 working hours would not exceed 35 per week, a minimum salary would be in force, and a mechanism of convergence of real salaries would have been instituted.

To demonstrate the seriousness of his commitment to Europe, Hollande declared to the press in March 1999 that he would take his seat in the European Parliament in July after the

²² "Fédération d'Etats Nations ... Une union librement consentie de nations et de peuples dans le respect de chacun et l'intérêt de tous."

elections. He wanted to invalidate accusations that the Socialists were not taking the elections seriously and that the top candidates would defect from their European seats at the first opportunity. Hollande's declaration also surprised Primer Minister Jospin, who responded by saying that Hollande would go to the National Assembly just like all the other first secretaries before him. In the party there was no doubt about the priorities despite the party's pro-federalism: first came the National Assembly, then the European Parliament. Like previous chief candidates Jospin, Fabius, and Rocard, Hollande would have to give precedence to the National Assembly. In this way, Jospin confirmed the popular perception that the European Parliament was less important than the National Assembly. He also reinforced a kind of electoral hypocrisy. If the chief candidate preferred Paris to Brussels and thus did not take the elections seriously, why should the electors care about Brussels and vote in the elections? Electors voted for the Socialists in the European Parliament elections because they wanted the Socialists to represent them in the European Parliament. Instead, largely because of Jospin's pressure, Hollande withdrew his candidature, but only after the votes had been cast.

Visions of Europe on the split right

On the right, the lists that most fully tapped into the public's anti-European sentiments were Pasqua's and de Villiers's RPF and the extreme right lists of Jean-Marie le Pen and Bruno Mégret, FN and MN, respectively. The RPF, the FN, and the MN represented alternatives for the traditional supporters of the RPR, which had turned into a pro-European party after Séguin's resignation from its leadership. Pasqua and de Villiers joined forces after Pasqua failed to form a Republican anti-European coalition with Chevènement's leftist sovereignists. According to opinion polls conducted by the BVA Institute on April 2, 1999, nearly two

months before the elections, Pasqua would have won about 4 percent of the votes by himself, whereas de Villiers would have received just under 5 percent of the votes. With these scores, neither would have surpassed the threshold of 5 percent: joining forces was the only alternative.

At the core of the RPF's political message were animosity toward Germany, glorification of the nation-state, anti-Americanism, and virulent defense of a neo-colbertist economic philosophy. Pasqua and de Villiers wanted to reinforce European security by developing a common defense without an integrated European defense. NATO had to be renovated in order to enable European action to be implemented by the Europeans themselves. In their security system, the WEU would become the pillar of the new European defense. According to a joint communiqué dated April 9, 1999, NATO had become "Europe's de facto diplomatic, defense, and security organization. We have to change Europe. The European Union, which was devised to guarantee peace and the prosperity of European nations, should not rely on others in the defense of its interests or its political activity. Independence is the condition of Europe's future and world stability" (Saux 1999, 7).²³

²³ "De facto l'organisation de la diplomatie, de la défense et de la sécurité en Europe. Il faut changer d'Europe. Conçue pour garantir la paix et assurer la prospérité des nations européennes, l'Union européenne ne saurait s'en remettre à d'autres pour défendre ses

intérêts ou conduire sa politique. L'indépendance est la condition de l'avenir de l'Europe et de l'équilibre mondial.”

Both the senator from the Hauts-de-Seine and the deputy from Vendée demanded that Europe forge its own defense program, while condemning the European superstate which prevented economic growth. They demanded a reduction of the European Union's structural spending. In their eyes, the Union had to stay an association of states, and national legislation had to be given the priority over European Union legislation. Consequently, the authority of the Council of Ministers had to be superior to that of the European Commission. The European Parliament's power should be restricted to codecision, and the powers of the national parliaments should be reinforced. These two institutions, the European Parliament and the national parliament, should form the two legislative chambers of the European Union. Dismayed by the pace of integration, Pasqua noted that "Treaty after treaty, we create independent institutions to which we grant powers that have taken our states centuries to conquer" (Pasqua 1999, 23).²⁴ In accordance with the famous Luxemburg compromise, the right of veto of the member-states had to be maintained.

Extreme right leaders Jean-Marie Le Pen and Bruno Mégret had a similar discourse to Pasqua's and de Villiers's. Playing on the general insecurity and fears about immigration, both portrayed Europe as a danger for France. Being pro-European was a crime against France. For Le Pen, for instance, Brussels was a Trojan horse in the service of America and NATO dominance. In terms of defense policy, both Le Pen and Mégret were partisans of a common European defense without the Americans. In economics, national priority had to be reinstated and the taxes of small and medium-sized companies drastically cut. National preference, which would, according to Le Pen, free France from the fetters of unemployment, had to be instituted. Bruno Mégret proposed that the Council of Ministers be replaced by a

²⁴ "Traité après traité, nous installons des organes indépendants auxquels nous donnons des pouvoirs que nos Etats nationaux ont mis des siècles à conquérir."

Council of Nations, which would make decisions in unanimity. In this scheme, the Commission would be replaced by an administrative secretariat, and both the Parliament and the European Court of Justice would become mere consultative bodies.

Nicolas Sarkozy, mayor of Neuilly and chief candidate on the list RPR-DL-GE, was faced with a difficult task. He took over the presidency of the RPR and the common list in mid-March 1999 after the resignation of Philippe Séguin. Séguin, deputy of the Vosges, had been chosen by President Chirac to head the Gaullist party in an effort to gather a single rightist list behind his presidential program. Séguin, a noted anti-European, had voted against the Maastricht treaty in 1992. Had the war in Kosovo and the NATO bombings on March 24, 1999 not occurred, France would not have gotten involved in the war and Séguin's European campaign could probably have been run without discussing purely European issues. Philippe Séguin had commented before the bombings that "In the European elections, talking about Europe is out" (Jarreau 1999, 13).²⁵ From the beginning of the war, Séguin criticized France's war efforts and its president, leader of French foreign policy and supreme military commander.

Unfortunately for Séguin, the war forced all the lists to take stances on a host of European issues. If Chirac, in appointing Séguin to head the Gaullist list, clearly did not want him to take anti-European stances, Chirac could not expect Séguin to take pro-European stances, either. Before the outbreak of the war this understanding remained workable, but it still constrained both Chirac's and Séguin's political activities. Although Séguin might have been able to attract anti-European voters from the extreme right and Pasqua's and Villiers's followers, Séguin's open anti-Europeanism prevented Chirac from attracting pro-European voters who were shifting their support to Bayrou's centrist and pro-European UDF. Had

²⁵ "Aux européennes, parler de l'Europe est hors sujet."

Séguin fully backed French military actions in Kosovo he might have stayed at the head of the Gaullist list. But for Séguin, backing French military action would have meant saying “yes” to cooperation with NATO and legitimizing intra-European military cooperation. He chose not to do so. In these changed political circumstances, the understanding between Chirac and Séguin came under growing pressure and, finally, broke down.

Sarkozy’s political future was totally dependent on how well his list did. A supporter of Edouard Balladur, Chirac’s main opponent on the right in the presidential elections of 1995, Sarkozy’s political task was to draw the split right together behind a presidential majority. “My ambition is not to end my days in the European Parliament. The President needs a strong Gaullist movement. That’s my mission” (Sauvage 1999, 7).²⁶ As the architect of Jacques Chirac’s European policy, Sarkozy would further Chirac’s re-election. Toward this goal, Sarkozy first attempted to create a common list with Alain Madelin’s DL and François Bayrou’s UDF. This plan failed, leaving the right in a state of total disarray on the eve of the elections. Sarkozy’s pathetic attempt to form a common list with Charles Pasqua was also doomed to failure from the beginning. For Pasqua, president of the regional council of the Hauts-de-Seine and general councillor of Neuilly, Sarkozy, mayor of Neuilly since 1983, was nothing but an opportunist.

Tactically speaking, Sarkozy was trying to bring together the anti- and pro-European supporters of the RPR, the Europeanists of the UDF, and the sovereignists of the Pasqua-de Villiers list. The aim of uniting pro- and anti-Europeans was also visible in presidential rhetoric. Pro-European in his public appearances, Chirac was also vehemently nationalistic in his ambition to construct a Europe for France, a French Europe. In order to succeed in this

²⁶ “Mon ambition n’est pas de finir mes jours au Parlement européen. Le président de la République a besoin de s’appuyer sur un mouvement gaulliste fort. Je suis porteur de cela.”

balancing act, Chirac and Sarkozy had to try to incorporate into their program both Bayrou's openly federalist program and Pasqua's ultranationalism. Indeed, Chirac's main political concern since the 1970s had been to eliminate or at least diminish the power of both the center-rightist and the conservative wings of the right.

In its official program, the RPR was for a Europe of nations and states rather than a federal Europe. Both the RPR and DL wanted to grant more powers to both the Commission and the Council, counterbalanced by an increase in the power of control of the national parliaments. They wanted to oppose the independence of the European Central Bank by strengthening the power of the large European Union countries and of the Euro 11, the committee composed of the ministers of finance of the countries in the Euro zone. In Sarkozy's and Madelin's view, enlargement of the European Union to the East had to be as swift as possible, integrating the new democracies into Europe, a dream of General de Gaulle's. Demanding a reform of social security that would address retirement, unemployment, poverty, and exclusion, both were opposed to European taxes and to the increase in the European budget. Sarkozy and Madelin were in favor of reinforcing common European defense in the framework of the WEU and NATO and of developing a common European defense industry.

In order to succeed, Sarkozy's operation of uniting the right required the president's full support. The problem was that the president, "supreme arbiter and above politics"²⁷ according to the French Fifth Republic Constitution, was solicited by both Sarkozy and Bayrou. Publicly Chirac could give his support to neither; his backing of Sarkozy's Gaullist list was more subtle. For instance, Sarkozy needed the support of other European politicians to challenge the Socialists, who were backed by the European Socialist Party. Although the RPR

²⁷ "Arbitre suprême et extérieur aux jeux politiques."

was not affiliated in the European Parliament with the European Popular Party (EPP), Chirac convinced Conservative Spanish Prime Minister José Maria Aznar to meet with Sarkozy. Sarkozy had vowed that the RPR would join the ranks of the EPP in the European Parliament. To the great surprise of François Bayrou, president of the UDF, which was part of the EPP, Chirac personally called Aznar and asked him to see Sarkozy “as a favor”²⁸ (*Le Canard enchaîné* 1999, 2), which Aznar of course could not refuse him.

What interests did the RPR-DL-GE list represent? Sarkozy and Madelin, leader of DL (the former *Parti républicain*, PR), took into account three general criteria in putting together their list of candidates. The first criteria was that no deputies could run, except the two chief candidates. Sarkozy and Madelin wanted to prevent the holding of a plurality of posts from being too blatant because it would have been harmful for their image as modernizing parties. The second criteria was that persons having served two terms in the European Parliament could not be candidates. This guaranteed the renewal of French representation in the European Parliament. Of the first 30 candidates on the list, three-fourths were new. The third criteria was gender parity, which had become a political must: half of the first 30 candidates were women, half men. All in all, of the 87 candidates, 48 were women and 39 men. Sarkozy was quick to capitalize on this, declaring that his list had more women candidates than Bayrou’s or Pasqua’s. Clearly the Gaullist chief candidate saw having women candidates as a condition for winning the elections. “We have gone beyond the requirements of parity. Like this, we can

²⁸ “Comme un service.”

rest easy during the elections” (Grosjean 1999, 9).²⁹ The problem was finding the women, and Sarkozy was forced to list candidates such as Clara Gaymard (21st position), the wife of a former State Secretary of Health.

Apart from these general criteria Sarkozy and Madelin had to take into account the various currents in their respective parties. By appointing Sarkozy to follow Séguin as chief candidate of the RPR, Chirac secured the passive support of former Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, a potential challenger on the right. Margie Sudre, number three on the list, was a former state secretary of Francophone relations and close to Chirac. Apart from being a woman, Sudre also represented the island of Réunion. Tenth and eighteenth on the list were Christine de Veyrac and Mylène Descanges, former assistants to former president of the UDF Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. The presence of these candidates on the list in eligible positions attested to Sarkozy’s close relations with Giscard and to the former president’s willingness to “play his own game” and give his support to Chirac instead of backing Bayrou. The followers of Alan Juppé, former Prime Minister and mayor of Bordeaux, included Hugues Martin (15th position), special advisor to Juppé, Yves Wervaerde (12th position), Juppé’s former substitute in Paris, and Marie-Thérèse Hermange (9th position): all had good chances of getting elected. The candidates behind Philippe Séguy, former Speaker of the National Assembly, included Serge Karoutchi (11th position), deputy and president of the RPR at the regional council of the

²⁹ “Nous avons été au-delà des impératifs de la parité. Comme ça, on sera tranquille pour les élections.”

Île-de-France, and deputy Anne-Marie Schaffner (17th position). One of Sarkozy's candidates was regional councillor of Auvergne Brice Hortefeux (13th position). Apart from Alain Madelin, deputy and mayor of Redon, two other candidates were former ministers in Juppé's 1995 government, Eric Raoult (RPR) and François Hostalier (DL) (Saux 1999). DL candidates included, apart from Madelin, MEP Françoise Grossetête (4th position), MEP Thierry Jean-Pierre (6th position), MEP Yves Wervaerde (12th position), and Anne-Marie Schaffner (17th position). All in all, of the 87 candidates on this list, 47 were members of the RPR, 29 of DL, and 3 of GE. Eight of the candidates were regional officials and "representatives of civil society".

On the center-right, the chief candidate of the UDF, François Bayrou, former Minister of Education in Edouard Balladur's government, was openly federalist, vowing to take his seat in the European Parliament if elected. This was a clear sign of commitment for a public used to defection: as noted above chief candidates usually gave up their seats in the European Parliament shortly after having been elected. Without the war raging in Kosovo, the content of the debate over Europe in the elections would probably have been reduced to abstract internal quarrels over political Europe. As a consequence of the war, a real European agenda became possible. It made perfect sense, in this situation, for Bayrou to run his own independent UDF list instead of joining forces with other right-wing lists. Sarkozy and Madelin bargained for some time with Bayrou, who demanded fulfilment of three conditions to create a common list: support of European defense, a European constitution, and a European president.

Since 1998, relations between the UDF and the RPR had been tumultuous. The "*Alliance pour la France*", an umbrella organization created by the parties to further their common interests, had been a disappointment for Bayrou: the larger RPR seemed systematically to get a better deal. The UDF lost the presidency of the Senate in October 1998,

confronted the RPR and DL concerning the succession of Charles Millon to the presidency of the Rhône-Alpes regional council, and was faced with the “non negotiable” choice of Philippe Séguin as the head of the list for the European elections. The UDF’s campaign slogan was “*Une Europe de la clarté.*” In his program, Bayrou wanted to see a common European defense on the basis of the WEU, which would be integrated into the European Union. This intervention force would not supplant the national armies. Rather, it would be called in by the Council of Ministers voting by majority. Bayrou called bluntly for European defense, a European constitution, and the election of a European president who would “carry as much weigh on the world scene as the President of the United States does” (*Le Monde* 1999a, 7).³⁰ A college composed of national and European parliamentarians would elect the European president by universal suffrage. Bayrou also defended a European tax that would replace the national contributions to the European Union budget.

In putting together his list Bayrou had to take into account criteria similar to those Sarkozy-Madelin had to consider when they created the RPR-DL-GE list. On Bayrou’s list, 45 of the 87 candidates were women. Of the first eleven candidates five were women, including such prominent politicians as future President of the European Parliament Nicole Fontaine (2nd position) and Françoise de Veyrinas, a Minister in Alain Juppé’s first government, 10th position. Like Sarkozy and Madelin, he also had problems finding women. Bayrou couldn’t avoid listing the wives of political supporters. Jeanne-Françoise Hutin, wife of François Hutin-Desgrées, publisher of *Ouest-France*, the largest French regional newspaper (circulation 800,000), was 17th and municipal councillor Janelly Fourton, wife of the CEO of Rhône-Poulenc, was 7th. According to the satirical weekly *Le canard enchaîné*, in response to Hutin’s candidature “*Ouest-France* gives particular attention to the appearances of the UDF

³⁰ “Peser sur la scène du monde aussi lourd que le président des Etats-Unis.”

list” (*Le canard enchaîné* 1999b, 21).³¹ Other well-known candidates included General Philippe Morillon (3rd position), hero of the Bosnia-Herzegovina war, Alain Lamassoure (4th position), former Minister for European affairs in Edouard Balladur’s government, and Thierry Cornillet (8th position), President of *Parti Radical* (PR) and mayor of Montélimar.

³¹ “*Ouest-France* accorde une place toute particulière aux manifestations de la liste UDF.”

In the anti-European camp, the CNPT list led by Jean Saint-Josse, regional councillor of Aquitaine and mayor of Corraze (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), was a clearly rural and regional anti-political list. Its budget was a modest FF 5.5 million compared to the Communist Party's FF 40 million. Many of its candidates were former sportsmen, presidents of hunting associations, and individuals involved in the gun industry. Left behind in the wake of economic modernization, they fought against cultural uniformization and the power of the European technocrats. Anti-ecologist, they opposed the policies of Green Minister of the Environment Dominique Voynet, which they thought threatened traditional ways of life connected to hunting and fishing by forbidding, for instance, the night hunting of woodpigeons (*palombes*). According to Saint-Josse, Europe had to stay a Europe of differences, a space "where regional and national identities are recognized, where elected officials instead of technocrats make decisions" (Garcia 1999, 10).³²

The election results

The 1999 European parliament elections were held on Sunday June 13 in all 15 European Union countries. In France, the abstention rate reached a record high of 52.98 per cent. As in previous elections, the average French voter was an educated, middle-aged, upper middle class man interested in politics. The most attentive to European politics were farmers, managers, and members of the liberal professions. The highest rates of abstention were found among the young, women, manual workers and employees (Ysmal 1999, 6). According to Pierre Giacometti of the opinion polling organization IPSOS, the main reason for the high

³² "Où l'on reconnaîtra les identités des régions et des nations, où les élus décideront à la place des technocrates."

level of abstentions was the absence of visible issues (Guiral 1999, 8). The electorate felt its vote would not change anything. The results were as follows:

TABLE 3. Elections to the European Parliament, 1999

List	Percentage of votes	Number of seats
PS-MDC-PRG	21.95 per cent	22
RPF	13.05 per cent	13
RPR-DL-GE	12.82 per cent	12
Greens	9.72 per cent	9
UDF	9.28 per cent	9
Communists	6.78 per cent	6
CPNT	6.77 per cent	6
FN	5.69 per cent	5
LO-LCR	5.18 per cent	5

Source: Ministère de l'intérieur, *Libération* June 15, 1999, 2.

Apart from the lists of social movement lists such the unemployed that did not pass the threshold of 5 per cent, the losers in these elections were the extreme right, the Communists, and the RPR-DL-GE list. The extreme right, once united behind their leader Le Pen, was now

divided into two fractions, Le Pen's FN and Mégret's MN. As a result, only Le Pen's party got over 5 per cent of the votes and succeeded in getting 5 seats in the Parliament. The Communists, led by Robert Hue, stayed slightly under their goal of 6.8 per cent with 6.78 percent of the votes (6 seats). Half of these seats went to various civil activists, including the former president of *SOS-Racisme* Fodé Sylla. Chirac's presidential list led by Sarkozy did not succeed in attracting the votes of the more conservative electorate, which turned either to Pasqua's and de Villier's RPF or to the extreme right lists. As a result of the electoral failure of the Gaullists, the Socialists' and Jospin's positions were strengthened, whereas that of President Chirac was weakened. The three parties of the traditional right got around 35 percent of the votes. On the left, the parties in power were the winners with about 39 percent of the votes.

The surprise winners in the elections were Pasqua's and de Villiers's RPF, the Greens, and the CNPT. The Greens, led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, succeeded better than the Communists in attracting some of the passive voters. The hunters' list, led by Jean Saint-Josse, got 6.77 percent of the votes and 6 seats in the European Parliament. Not surprisingly, most of its supporters were in the rural areas of Southwest France. In some villages, up to 30 percent of the votes cast went to the hunters. How can this success be explained? It was a protest vote against the established parties in elections perceived as being secondary. Many who had previously voted for Bayrou, president of the general council of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, had had enough of the quarrels between the leaders of the right and cast their ballot for "the hunters" as they were familiarly called. Others, feeling that the Green Minister of Environment, Dominique Voynet, was threatening the traditional rural way of life with the European Nature 2000 legislation, found in Saint-Josse's program a defence of their rural interests and their patrimony. "Jean-Claude," president of a local hunting association in Orion

(Pyrénées-Atlantique), justified his choice the following way:

I voted against the Greens, I blame them for everything, they are anti-hunting, anti-rural, anti-everything. They are against the countryside. There is a general feeling of unease in the countryside, but the politicians don't care, so this is the only way to get yourself heard. (Grosjean 1999, 9)³³

Conclusions

Social scientific research on globalization and regional integration has mainly concentrated on the economic and labor-related aspects of these processes, emphasizing their destructive consequences. Through a case study of the 1999 French elections to the European Parliament, I have attempted to show that Europeanization offers avenues for the modernization of political life. These elections provided an opportunity for political parties and anti-establishment movements to empower voiceless groups and imagine a European future for France. For the first time in French political history, each list had an equal number of male and female candidates, a revolutionary occurrence in a country that, despite its self-image as

³³ “J’ai voté contre les Verts, je leur reproche tout, ils sont antichasse, antiruralité, antitout. Voilà, ils sont contre la campagne. Il y a un malaise dans les campagnes, les politiques s’en foutent, alors c’est le seul moyen de se faire entendre.”

the inventor of human rights, has lagged behind in all indicators relative to women in politics. For the first time, some lists such as the Communist party list included social activists of color who were not members of the PCF. In this way the Communists tried to bring into the political process voiceless groups such as France's Muslims and the unemployed. For the first time, despite the fact that France was one of the originators of the European Communities in the 1950s, political parties had to elaborate a European dimension in issues such as defense policy, European taxation, and immigration. As a result of European regional integration, political parties and lists such as the regional "hunters" imagined their own Europe and, in the process, challenged the official "French Europe" elaborated by government and president. The candidates to the European Parliament constructed an alternative Europe to the one presented by official discourse that concentrates on a unified, Republican France: a Europe where non-Christians, the unemployed, women, and regional representatives would also have a public voice. In these ways, the elections contributed to a modernization of French politics.

Not only has European political integration provided marginal groups in France with an access to national politics through European Parliament elections, it has also supplied the government and the presidency with new resources, connecting them to trans-European circles and networks that are developing their own political culture. The success of neoliberal economic doctrines in the European Union may have in part to do with these networks. National ministers spend half their time wrestling with European affairs in the Council of Ministers of the European Union and in transnational party structures, developing a common culture and outlook on politics and economics. The main ingredients for this *Weltanschauung* are well known: electoral cycles should not interfere with economic policy and unemployment figures should not have priority over other monetary indices in the evaluation of economic and political success.

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